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3) During summit talks, Sweden urges Japan to improve relations with China

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
May 5, 2006

By Shoichi Takayama, Stockholm

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on the morning of May 3 (night of the same day, Japan time) met with Swedish Prime Minister Persson at the Swedish prime minister's office in Stockholm.

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During the talks, Persson urged Koizumi to improve relations with China: "Japan and China are both very important countries in Asia. It's important for the two nations to develop relations in a friendly manner."

Koizumi told Persson: "I am an advocate for friendship with China. Because of one issue, the Chinese leader has now refused to meet with the Japanese leader, but I am ready to hold a summit meeting with China at anytime." Speaking of his visits to Yasukuni Shrine, against which China has objected, Koizumi explained: "I visit there out of a desire for peace."

Koizumi gave an account of the abductions of Japanese nationals by North Korea. Persson indicated his intention to cooperate to resolve the issue, telling Koizumi: "Sweden has a strong interest in human rights issues. We have diplomatic ties with North Korea and have opportunities to meet with (North Korean leaders). We'd like to offer as much cooperation as possible to you."

The two leaders agreed on the need to reform the United Nations. But Persson did not make clear whether he would endorse Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

4) Prime Minister's tour of Africa, Northern Europe gets passing mark, demonstrating friendly relations with faraway countries and a lack of measures to improve ties with neighboring countries

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 5) (Full)
May 5, 2006

Shoichi Takayama, Stockholm

Winding up his tour of three countries in Africa and Northern Europe on May 4, Prime Minister Koizumi will return home on May 15. Through the tour, he has achieved some positive results regarding mid- and long-term tasks, such as strengthening ties with the African Union (AU). But he has put urgent challenges, including improving ties with China and South Korea, on the backburner.

Koizumi visited Ethiopia and Ghana in Africa. During his stay in the two countries, Koizumi mentioned Japan's bid to get permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council and obtained AU Chairman Konare's pledge that "all countries in Africa support" Japan's bid, though this may have been lip service.

Koizumi suddenly suggested establishing a Hideyo Noguchi award to honor biomedical researchers in Africa apparently in a bid to highlight his efforts to strengthen relations with Africa.

In Sweden, Koizumi exchanged views on common tasks facing advanced nations, such as how to deal with the falling birthrate.

But there are no pending issues between Japan and these countries. As an incumbent prime minister, Koizumi visited the three countries for the first time. "The tour itself of these three countries was seen as achievement," according to a government official.

On the other hand, many diplomatic issues that need to be tackled quickly have been left in limbo.

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The foremost one is Japan's Asia diplomacy. There are no prospects for improving relations with China and South Korea, which are both criticizing Koizumi's repeated visits to Yasukuni Shrine. Mutual visits between the leaders of Japan and China and the shuttle diplomacy between the leaders of Japan and South Korea have been interrupted. Beijing and Seoul appear farther away from Japan than Africa and North Europe.

The same holds true of the North Korean issue. Koizumi and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il exchanged the Pyongyang Declaration in September 2002. The two countries appeared to be moving forward toward resolving the abduction issue and normalizing diplomatic ties, but since then there has been no major progress, except that some of the abduction victims and their family members returned home.

Koizumi decided to dispatch Self-Defense Forces (SDF) troops to Iraq despite objections at home. He wanted to pull out the dispatched troops while he is in office, but given the chaotic situation in Iraq, he has no choice but to delay a withdrawal of the SDF until the fall or later. Koizumi was once keen about resolving the Northern Territories issue, but there has been no progress.

How will Koizumi tackle these pending issues during the remaining five months before he steps down? Will he pass them all on to his successor? His responsibility is now called into question.

5) Aso expresses Japan's willingness to consider extending ASDF activities to cover Baghdad if there is a request from UN

NIHON KEIZAI (Top play) (Excerpts)
Evening, May 6, 2006

Toyofumi Amano, Brussels

Foreign Minister Taro Aso, now traveling Europe, gave an interview to the Nihon Keizai Shimbun at a hotel in Brussels on the night of May 4. Touching on the Kuwait-based Air Self-Defense Force's (ASDF) activities for the reconstruction of Iraq, Aso revealed the government's plan to consider airlifting personnel and supplies to Baghdad International Airport, saying, "If there is a strong request from the United Nations for airlifting supplies and personnel to Baghdad, there won't be any problem if Japan complies with it." It was the first case for a Japanese cabinet minister to refer to expanding flight routes in Iraq.

The ASDF, which is now based at Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait, has been airlifting supplies to Tallil Airport for Ground Self-Defense Force troops in the southern Iraqi city of Samawah.

The US military has repeatedly asked for the ASDF's transport activities to cover Baghdad to meet the high demand there, but the ASDF rejected the requests citing the unstable security situation. A decision to cover Baghdad would mean the ASDF's shift of emphasis from reconstruction assistance to logistical support for the multinational forces' security activities.

Aso explained why the government would consider an expansion of the ASDF's activities to include Baghdad this way:

"Over the last two years or so, there have been no terrorist or

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rocket-propelled grenade attacks at Baghdad International Airport. The ASDF's C130 transport planes are capable of countering guided missiles. They possess better countermeasures than those of other countries."

Aso added, however, that there has been no formal request from the UN for the ASDF's activities to cover Baghdad.

6) Japan's 3 trillion yen share not a detailed estimate: Lawless

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
May 4, 2006

WASHINGTON-US Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Lawless met with Fumio Kyuma, chairman of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's executive board, and other ruling coalition delegates on May 2 at the Pentagon. In his recent press remarks, Lawless said Japan's share of costs for the realignment of US forces in Japan would be approximately 26 billion dollars, equivalent to 2.886 trillion yen in the fiscal 2006 budget. The figure, however, was not based on a detailed estimate, Lawless told the delegates. With this, he admitted that the grounds for the amount were insufficient.

"In Japan, all eyes were on the cost of relocating Okinawa-based Marines to Guam," Lawless said. "But," he added, "I wanted to show that much more spending will be needed for the force realignment."

On April 25, Lawless met the press and then explained that Japan would pay 6.09 billion dollars-equivalent to 59% of the cost of Marine relocation from Okinawa to Guam-and would additionally pay about 20 billion dollars for the realignment of US forces in Japan. In the meantime, Japan has raised questions about the grounds for the estimated amount of money.

7) Japan, US defense chiefs agree to study new framework for bilateral defense cooperation

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
May 4, 2006

WASHINGTON-Visiting Defense Agency Director General Nukaga met with US Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld for about 30 minutes at the Pentagon. In the meeting, Nukaga and Rumsfeld agreed to study a new framework for bilateral defense cooperation in place of the current Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines.

"We've seen unexpected events following our 1996 joint declaration on security," Nukaga said in the meeting. "It's important to make steady studies to deal with new developments," he noted, adding, "We'll need to show the overarching objectives and ideals of our alliance, and that will lead to transparency." With this, Nukaga stressed the necessity of a new framework.

"I know how important it is, so it's all right to talk," Rumsfeld responded. At the same time, Rumsfeld also said, "We're now in the process of talking about specific defense cooperation between our two countries, and it's important to carry it out in a steady way." With this, the Pentagon chief noted that Japan and the United States, on the sidelines of talks on bilateral defense cooperation, should also go ahead with bilateral defense planning in anticipation of emergencies in Japan and mutual cooperation

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planning in anticipation of emergencies in areas surrounding Japan.

On May 1, Japan and the United States held a "two-plus-two" meeting of their intergovernmental security consultative committee and then finalized a report regarding the realignment of US forces in Japan. "In order to implement the agreement, the Japanese government will make a cabinet decision," Nukaga said. "The Japanese government will also coordinate with local governments and will take budgetary measures," he also said, adding, "We will make efforts to obtain public understanding."

Another issue in the meeting was whether to withdraw Ground Self-Defense Force troops currently deployed in Iraq. "We'd like to consider it while factoring in the local political process, security situation, and reconstruction." Rumsfeld showed his understanding.

8) Opposition parties criticize final agreement on USFJ realignment

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
May 3, 2006

Opposition parties on May 2 released statements criticizing the final agreement on the realignment of US forces in Japan reached between the governments of Japan and the United States. The opposition intends to pursue the government's accountability regarding the grounds for Japan's share of the cost for realigning the US military.

Takeaki Matsumoto, chairman of the largest opposition party Minshuto's (Democratic Party of Japan) Policy Research Committee, stated: "The public will have to bear an enormous burden. The government has a significant responsibility." He gave a modicum of praise to a plan of relocating US Marines from Okinawa to Guam, saying, "The agreement would reduce some of Japan's burden." He, however, argued, "Fundamental discussions were not conducted on whether Japan should bear the costs, and the process of negotiations was unclear."

Japanese Communist Party Policy Committee Chairman Akira Koike said:

"Japan and the United States have agreed to expand and strengthen the Japan-US military alliance on a global scale. The two countries have also agreed to greatly change the alliance to an aggressive one."

Social Democratic Party Secretary General Seiji Mataichi stated: "The final accord will substantially change Japan's security policy exceeding the Japan-US Security Treaty. Therefore, we cannot accept it."

9) Local government reacting to central government's demand for 40 billion yen payment to take back land used for US Army Sagami Depot

MAINICHI (Top Play) (Excerpts)
May 3, 2006

The US military has agreed to return to Japan 17 hectares of the
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land now used for US Army Sagami Depot in Sagami City, Kanagawa Prefecture. If the Sagami City municipal government redevelops the returned land, it will be required to pay 30 to 40 billion yen to the central government. The municipal government intends to ask the central government to transfer it free of charge, claiming that the city has greatly suffered from the presence of the base for nearly 70 years since the rule of the Imperial Japanese Army. But the Finance Ministry, keeping the current financial difficulties in mind, wants to allow the local government to use the land based on an onerous contract. One ministry official said: "There is the possibility that if the city is unable to purchase the land, the government might sell it to the private sector."

Of the 214 hectares of the Sagami General Depot, the first-class area with a space of 17 hectares in front of JR Sagami Station will be returned to Japan. The central government possesses most of the area now used for the depot. The Imperial Japanese Army used it as a plant to manufacture tanks and bombshells beginning in 1938, but the US military took over the land in 1949. The municipal government began to call on the US to return the land about 40 years ago. In response, the US has finally agreed to the request.

The local government hopes to redevelop the land in front of the station. According to the Finance Ministry, however, it is required as a general rule for the central government to transfer property returned from the US military to base-housing local governments for value based on market rates. Should a road be constructed, the land will be transferred free of charge, but if the land is used for a park, the local government concerned will be asked to pay for one-third of the area. According to its estimate, the Sagami-hara government has worked out 30 to 40 billion yen as the acquisition fee. The local government has already paid a total of 18.4 billion yen to the central government for 37.9 hectares of land vacated by the US military.

10) Plan to finance US Marine relocation to Guam under JBIC loan arrangement may affect reforms of government-affiliated financial institutions

SANKEI (Page 2) (Excerpts)
May 7, 2006

The government has decided to finance its share of the total cost for relocating Okinawa-based Marines to Guam with loans from the Japan Bank for International Corporation (JBIC). This plan, though, goes against its policy direction of scaling down the JBIC as part of its planned streamlining of government-affiliated financial institutions. It is also uncertain whether the government will be able to submit to the current Diet session legislation to make it possible to earmark money for the realignment of US forces in Japan. The government has been torn between administrative reforms and financial assistance for the US military.

The government has decided to pay approximately 700 billion yen as its share of the total Guam relocation cost. Of the amount, it will finance about 380 billion yen in costs for constructing housing for troops' families and infrastructures with loans and investments. Most of them will be funded by loans from JBIC.

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The administrative reform bills, which the government has deemed as the most important legislation in the current Diet session, was passed the House of Representatives in mid-April and is now under deliberations at the House of Councillors. The legislation proposes that the international financing section should be separated from JBIC and be merged with four banks into a new policy finance institution in fiscal 2008. This legislation also comes up with the numerical target of halving the total loans outstanding of public financial institutions in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) by the end of fiscal 2008, based on the principle of forming a simple, effective government.

Japan, however, is urged to take an emergency step to finance its huge share of the cost of US Marines to Guam. The government is willing to set up a special account in JBIC to offer loans only for the Guam relocation plan and place it outside the reach of the targeted reduction of the loans outstanding.

To do so, the government will have to make legal preparations to ensure JBIC loans and financial support for base-hosting local communities on which a heavier burden will be imposed following the planned US force realignment. One government official said: "We must explain to the public the necessity of setting up a separate framework for loans for Guam relocation through Diet deliberations."

11) Defense Agency chief Nukaga: Expenditures for USFJ realignment, excluding cost of relocating US Marines to Guam, will be less than 2 trillion yen

YOMIURI (Page 8) (Full)
May 8, 2006

Defense Agency Director General Fukushima Nukaga, appearing on an NHK talk show yesterday, said that expenditures for troops

relocations within Japan, which were incorporated in a final agreement on the realignment of US forces in Japan "should not cost two or three trillion yen." He then indicated that the cost for the USFJ realignment, excluding the cost of relocating US Marines from Okinawa to Guam, would total less than 2 trillion yen.

Nukaga, however, denied a possible tax hike, saying, "It is not being considered at this time."

US Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Lawless stated in late April that Japan's share would total 20 billion dollars (2.22 trillion yen). He, however, in a meeting on May 2 with Liberal Democratic Party General Council Chairman Fumio Kyuma and others said, "The figures are not specific ones."

12) Japan-US defense cooperation: Government to propose at next month's summit meeting an updating of joint operations plan to specify deployment, use of forces, premised on emergency and heightened deterrence capability

NIHON KEIZAI (Top play) (Full)
May 5, 2006

The government has decided to completely update the joint Japan-US operations plan that sets the specific cooperative relationship between the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the US

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armed forces during a Japan defense emergency, and the Japan-US mutual cooperation plan for use in an emergency in areas surrounding Japan. The rewriting of the plans will stipulate in detail the deployment and use of troops, as well as such other features as the emergency use of private facilities. It also will heightened the defense capability toward North Korea and other countries. The government is considering the creation of a new scheme to replace the existing Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines set in 1997 and making this core document. It aims at completion of the rewriting of the plans by next summer at the earliest.

With Japan-US consultations on US force realignment concluded, the Japanese government is aiming now at giving more effective content to the bilateral alliance as it enters a new stage. Final coordination is proceeding in the direction of having Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi propose the revisions at the summit meeting with US President Bush in late June. Legally-based responses to a Japan defense emergency and to contingencies in areas neighboring Japan have largely been set by such legislation as the Self-Defense Forces Law, defense emergency legislation, and the national protection legislation. However, although this series of laws mention comprehensive defense cooperation between Japan and United States, they lack specificity.

The joint operations plan once revised would become the implementation guidelines that specifically indicate what tactical operations the three self-defense forces and the US forces will carry out during a contingency. Although the 1997 defense cooperation guidelines clearly mention such, the effort to draft specifics was slow, irritating the US. For example, should North Korea fire missiles at Japan and there are casualties, the safety of local residents must be secured, and the SDF and US forces must be ready to counterattack. There needs to be a plan that would specify the units to be deployed in an emergency and the quantity of goods to be transported and the transport means. In addition, the plan must specify by name the roads, ports, airports, and medical facilities to be used.

Although the existence of a plan to handle secrets has been mentioned, "the timetable for drafting such has lapsed, and there is a lack of specificity," noted a senior Defense Agency official. For that reason, the government has decided on a policy course of drafting a detailed plan covering the following areas: 1) a Japan emergency, premising aggression by North Korea or another country; 2) a regional contingency, premised on such on the Korean Peninsula or Taiwan Strait; and 3) Japan-US cooperation

in case of international terrorism, as well as a large-scale natural disaster.

With the Japan-US agreement on USFJ realignment, the Japanese and US governments have basically concurred on studying the possibility of a new defense cooperation scheme to replace the old set of guidelines. The government's thinking is to clearly position the new scheme as the means for responding to such new threats as terrorism, as well as to update the joint operations plan. Consideration is being given to issuing a new declaration that would revise the joint security declaration of 1996. However, the deep-seated view of the US is that if the joint operations plan is updated, there would be no need for a new defense scheme, too; so coordination on this will be a challenge.

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The rewriting of the joint plan would fall under the purview of such bodies as the bilateral planning committee (BPC), whose participants include the deputy commander of the US forces Japan and the chairman of the Joint Staff Council. With local governments expressing their reluctance to accept the USFJ realignment agreement, the task of drafting a new plan that has combat in mind is likely to run into objections from opposition parties and local governments.

13) New framework proposed with aim of attaching importance to efficacy of defense cooperation; Specific discussion with US to kick off

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
May 3, 2006

(Washington, Reporter Tatsuya Fukumoto)

Defense Agency Director General Nukaga on May 1 proposed holding talks to discuss a possible creation of a framework for new defense cooperation that will replace the existing bilateral defense cooperation guidelines mapped out in 1997. He made this proposal, based on the US position: "It would be desirable to create a more effective framework rather than reviewing the existing guidelines." Nukaga intends to discuss the specifics of the new framework in concrete terms during a meeting with Defense Secretary Rumsfeld on the 3rd.

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Nukaga on the evening of the 1st (morning of the 2nd, Japan time) told reporters traveling with him at a hotel in Washington: "Just reviewing the guidelines will be very limited in terms of scale. The US side has also said, 'such an approach will lack flexibility.'"

The JDA had at first undertaken coordination of views with the possibility of incorporating the revision plan in a final report on USFJ realignment, because Rumsfeld on April 2 told Nukaga, "I agree with the revision plan." However, a number of Foreign Ministry officials voiced a negative view toward the idea of revising the existing guidelines with Foreign Minister Aso noting, "We are not considering reviewing the guidelines immediately." Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi also said, "I do not think there is any insufficiencies in the guidelines that would require immediate revision." The US side called for a framework to replace the existing guidelines from a perspective of attaching importance to bringing about cooperation between the Self-Defense Force and the US military, including the formulation of a mutual cooperation plan in the event of emergencies in areas surrounding Japan.

14) Futenma relocation: Nukaga aims for cabinet decision later this month upon winning Inamine's concurrence

ASAHI (Page 3) (Excerpts)
May 3, 2006

Defense Agency Director General Fukushima Nukaga, now visiting

the United States, expressed his desire on the night of May 1 (around noon May 2, Japan time) for a new cabinet decision later this month that would adopt a new relocation agreement and cancel Japan's old agreement with the US to relocate the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station from Ginowan to waters off the Henoko

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district. The defense chief expressed the view to journalists traveling with him to Washington. Nukaga also plans to hold talks with Okinawa Gov. Keiichi Inamine after the Golden Week consecutive holiday period to win his concurrence on the final agreement. The defense chief also intends to urge Inamine to hold talks with Prime Minister Koizumi.

Defense Facilities Administration Agency Director General Iwao Kitahara is scheduled to brief Inamine on the final agreement on May 4. Nukaga, too, intends to seek Inamine's support for the Futenma relocation plan by explaining that such steps as relocating Okinawa-based US Marines to Guam and returning US military facilities would help reduce Okinawa's burden.

Inamine stated in a press meeting on May 2, "I would like to respect Okinawa's stance (of seeking a relocation site outside the prefecture except for the Henoko offshore plan)." Inamine also expressed his intention to look for ways to prevent a relocated base from becoming a permanent fixture and seek emergency measures to eliminate Futenma's risks based on the agreed plan. They are regarded as Inamine's alternative conditions to replace such previous conditions as placing a 15-year time limit on the use of the alternate facility by the US military.

Nukaga intends to make a cabinet decision on a new relocation plan upon obtaining Inamine's consent to the final agreement. Once talks between Inamine and Prime Minister Koizumi were held, Nukaga wants to reflect Okinawa's intention in a cabinet decision.

A senior government official noted May 1: "A cabinet decision does not require Okinawa's agreement. But because there is an agreement with Nago, the central government is seeking the understanding of the prefectural government." Thus he indicated that it was desirable for the government to make a cabinet decision after winning the concurrence of Okinawa in order to avoid a local backlash.

15) Inamine proposes temporary heliport for Futenma airfield, appreciates USFJ realignment

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Full)
May 5, 2006

Okinawa Prefecture's Governor Keiichi Inamine met with Defense Facilities Administration Agency Director General Iwao Kitahara yesterday at the Okinawa prefectural government office. In the meeting, Inamine expressed the prefectural government's view of the final report on the realignment of US forces in Japan, saying, "We appreciate it on the whole." However, Inamine rejected the planned relocation of Futenma airfield in the city of Ginowan to a coastal area of Camp Schwab in the city of Nago. As an emergency measure to eliminate the airfield's danger, Inamine proposed building a temporary heliport in an inland area on the premises of Camp Schwab. Kitahara answered, "We'd like to obtain Okinawa Prefecture's understanding on the relocation plan that has reached an agreement between the Japanese and US governments."

After the meeting, Inamine held a press conference, in which he clarified his positive view of the final report, noting that it incorporated an agreement to move about 8,000 US Marines from

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Okinawa to Guam and return Futenma airfield in its entirety. "On the whole, I highly appreciate the final report as alleviating our base-hosting burden in a way that visible to the prefecture's

people."

The city of Nago and the village of Ginozason, which are to host Futenma airfield's alternative in its relocation, have basically agreed with the government on the Futenma relocation to Camp Schwab's coastal site. However, Inamine said he could not accept it. For one thing, Inamine said Futenma airfield's relocation to a coastal area of Camp Schwab differs from Okinawa Prefecture's basic stance of seeking to move the Marines elsewhere outside of Okinawa Prefecture. For another, he noted that the prefectural and central governments agreed on a basic plan to relocate Futenma airfield to a site in waters off the Henoko district of Nago, whereas the government changed the basic plan in the recent realignment talks.

Inamine also remarked that the original purpose of relocating Futenma airfield was to get rid of danger, adding: "Aside from the relocation issue, the most important thing is to take emergency measures." It will take at least eight years to complete the construction of V-shaped airstrips, so the governor called for building a temporary heliport for provisional use.

16) Iwakuni mayor tells deputy JDA director general, "I will not agree on the transfer of carrier-based aircraft"

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)
May 3, 2006

Katsusuke Ihara, mayor of Iwakuni, Yamaguchi Prefecture, on May 2 met with Deputy Defense Agency Director General Takemasa Moriya. Regarding the relocation of carrier-based aircraft from US Atsugi Naval Air Station (Yamato, Kanagawa City) to Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station as part of USFJ realignment, Ihara said, "I cannot agree on the proposal." He agreed to continue talks, though.

17) Kyuma calls for flexible application of three weapons-export rules to allow Japan to repair US military aircraft, other equipment

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 1) (Full)
Evening, May 6, 2006

Hiroshi Marutani, Washington

Liberal Democratic Party General Council Chairman Fumio Kyuma, in a press conference in Washington on the evening of May 4 (morning of May 5, Japan time), indicated that Japan should flexibly operate the three principles restricting arms exports and technology based on the final agreement reached between Tokyo and Washington US force realignment. As a specific example, Kyuma suggested allowing Japan to repair US warships and military aircraft in Japan.

Traveling to the US with LDP defense policy experts, Kyuma exchanged views with senior US government and military officials. Touching on US force realignment, Kyuma underlined the need to prevent the defense industry from weakening, saying: "The Japan-US alliance has been enhanced and improved. In order to preserve Japan's technology, the industrial sector needs to conduct

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exchanges with the US, in addition to intergovernmental and defense exchanges between the SDF and the US military."

Kyuma went on to say, "The three weapons-export principles must be relaxed to a certain extent, as is the case with the joint development of missile defense." Technology transfer to the US and the joint development of missile defense are allowed as exceptions under the three weapons-export principles. Kyuma's statement highlighted the need to expand the scope of exception further.

Kyuma also noted in connection with his talks with US officials: "Some US officials indicated that Japan would probably have to join the trend of developing defense technology multilaterally."

18) GSDF received security training March 2005 from US forces premised on quelling riots

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Excerpt)
May 8, 2006

It was learned yesterday that the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) received live-ammunition security training last year in March from the US Marines at Camp Hansen's training ground that encompasses four towns and cities in Okinawa including the town of Kin. The training was to enable the GSDF to quell riots and other acts of reckless violence. According to a report obtained by the Mainichi Shimbun, putting down rioting groups are mentioned, but the MSDF command indicates that such is training to protect the units. This is the first time that joint training between Japanese and US forces have been revealed as aimed at cooperating to quell violence.

19) Japan, US during foreign ministerial meeting agree to aim for early resumption of US beef imports

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
May 4, 2006

(Washington, Reporter Hiroshi Oyama)

Foreign Minister Aso on the morning of May 3 (late at night on May 3, Japan time) met with his US counterpart Rice at the Department of State for about 40 minutes. The two agreed to make efforts to aim for an early settlement of the US beef import resumption issue.

During the talks, Aso said: "There are many people who want to eat meat back in Japan. There are many people who want to sell meat here in the US. Though we have had trouble over import procedures, we must carry out inspections strictly." Aso thus pointed out the need to make sure that as a precondition to reinstate the beef trade, inspections must be carried out on meat packers that are authorized to export products to Japan. He made this comment bearing in mind the fact that the inclusion of vertebral columns, a material banned in Japan as a mad cow disease risk, in US beef shipment has led to the second ban on US beef imports by Japan.

Regarding Iran's nuclear development issue, Aso indicated his view that Iran has not correctly received a critical message from the international community, noting, "Their message has not been

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correctly transmitted to Iran."

20) Japan-US agriculture ministers' meeting; US indicates plan to reduce number of cattle subject to BSE inspection; Nakagawa urges to reconsider decision

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 3) (Full)
May 4, 2006

(Geneva, Reporter Takafumi Ichimura)

Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shoichi Nakagawa and US Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns on May 2 met in Geneva. Regarding the issue of resuming US beef imports by Japan, Johanns conveyed to Nakagawa the US plan to scale down the number of cattle subject to BSE inspections, based on the inspection result that the rate of BSE-infected cattle in the US is near zero." Nakagawa urged Johanns to reconsider the decision, saying, "Such a plan will not work positively for Japan."

Johanns explained cattle inspection results: "Among 42 million cows, only 4 to 7 head are suspected of being infected with BSE. US cattle's BSE risk is in effect zero." He revealed a plan to present an inspection report to the Japanese government possibly next week to have it vetted. He then handed copies of e-mails seeking economic sanctions against Japan from supporters of members of the House of Representatives who are against the

second ban on US imports placed by Japan. Johanns has thus once again urged the Japanese side to resume US beef imports, by indicating that the US side is becoming impatient.

Nakagawa said after the meeting: "The problem is not so much safety as whether the US can strictly observe the rules, including the removal of specified risk materials (SRM). Some members of the Food Safety Commission have pointed out that the US cattle inspection is lenient." Japanese consumers are increasingly becoming distrustful of the US inspection system, following the discoveries of SRM in US beef shipments to Hong Kong and Taiwan. Nakagawa indicated his view that under such a circumstance, it would not be appropriate to scale down the number of cattle subject to inspection.

21) Last resort proposal for resumption of US beef imports: Japan to inspect and verify safety of 37 facilities and remove ban in order; Full-scale negotiations with US after consecutive holidays

YOMIURI (Top play) (Excerpt)
Evening, May 6, 2006

Negotiations between Japan and the United on resuming US beef imports, halted when BSE-related risk materials were found in a shipment of US beef, will start full-scale following the consecutive holidays. Voices are rising in the Japanese government from those who wish an early resumption of imports. They say that even if the safety of meat packers in the US cannot all be confirmed, those that have been ascertained by Japanese inspections to be safe could be allowed to resume shipments in order. However, regarding the essential timetable for restarting imports, Japanese officials find themselves sandwiched in between the US, which is pressuring for an early resumption, and Japanese consumers, who demand the beef be safe.

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